/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[231] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[341] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/47 cont./

782 241 [776] The Abkhaz asks of Anaphanga, the goddess of crops: "Wherever I draw my furrow and strike with iron and with implement, may an abundance of grain be granted me; grant happiness to the sower and to the consumer." During reaping, when the sheaves are first brought home, the Abkhaz prays in honor of Anaphanga; during the fast of Assumption, however, a cross is made of the ears; kernels of maize and beans are fastened to a candle to avert possible harm by evil spirits, e.g., by Dzhadzha herself. This [776] Dzhadzha is an ugly goddess, short and fat; when she comes into a field she exclaims, "Natsvis, natsvis" (little finger! little finger!), i.e., the wish that the maize in that field grow no higher than a little finger, but if one pursues Dzhadzha with the words, "Raki dzaki, raki dzaki" ("cubit-span, cubit-span"), she leaves the field and her wish does not come true.

• [243] Before the threshing of the gomi /millet/ the Abkhaz pray to the great goddesses to keep the whole family in good health and to permit the whole household in future, and at the head the lady of the house herself, to gather at the beater for the threshing of the gomi (satsekhveli).

13.

A Prayer for the Bees

782 231 The Abkhaz bake a round loaf of bread with cheese, take it to the bee-garden, and pray to Ananagunda for the preservation of their bees; upon returning home, they break the loaf and eat it without looking at one another, for which some stand facing one door, some another.

14.

Prayer to the Sun and the Moon

782 821 The Abkhaz addresses the sun with the following prayer: "Sunlight, withhold not your benevolence from us, warmth

sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *d-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaẖwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*d-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswd-ẖwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the house, *dishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *d-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswd*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *dămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Ayt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Ayt'ar—bzhwdyt'ar! bzhyə-nəkhak zəndp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzdk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Ayt'ar—seven Ayt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Ayt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[1] *Alaẖwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *hwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *govi* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *Aa*, *Aasa—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are included in both pleiades.